

From: William D. Saums [mailto:bsaums@centechsolutions.com]
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Subject: Public Hearing Sept 26 re: CL&P response

I believe our utility infrastructure has become unsustainable using overhead wires to transmit power, cable and telephone utilities. The combination of trees, ice and overhead lines is, unreliable, unsightly, expensive and dangerous. I believe CL&P and other utility crews did a great job responding. But "management" by CL&P of the response, especially sending lawyers as "liaisons" to each town was disingenuous, and the public is skeptical. I know I am.

The real issue, however, is why did there had to be a response at all? Our nation's economy is becoming increasingly reliant on in-home services such as telephone, high speed internet and power; both for at home workers, small businesses and consumers. As a telecommunications industry professional who has helped bring this revolution about, I think we need to upgrade our infrastructure once and for all. As a 25 year telco industry veteran, I'm well aware of the cost of burying these utilities. But I think the time to continue promote this emperor with no clothes has passed.

Utility poles grow ever taller and heavier as they carry more infrastructure. Our economy and to a certain extent our national security relies on this infrastructure too much to argue that it's cheaper to repeatedly repair downed utility lines due to downed limbs, fallen trees, high winds and ice storms. The cost to the economy in lost revenue for all businesses large and small, the cost to repeatedly respond and repair, the cost to purchase and run generators, and the cost of lost billed revenue for the utilities themselves is greater in total than the cost to invest in an underground infrastructure that is safer, requires less maintenance and is far more reliable.

We need to ask the question more forcefully and push back harder when provided with the answer that it's too expensive to bury utilities in the northeast. Does it cost more? No doubt. Is the cost prohibitive? Certainly not. We bury our water mains. Is the cost argument valid, or is it designed to protect the repair and response empire, including labor? Major cities do not have overhead power and telco, nor does the rest of the nation. Only the northeast accepts this outmoded form of delivering services intermittently at best.

The solution? Bury the utilities. Start now.

Thank you.

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